THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL) : (a) Representations have been received against transfer of agro-aviation activities to Vayudoot;

(b) The decision to transfer agro-aviation activities to Vayudoot was taken side after due consideration of option available.

Model Railway Station in Goa

1924. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to be state :

(a) whether in view of International tourist importance of Goa, Government would reconsider to have a Model Railway Station either at Margao or Vasco-de-Gama in Goa; and

(b) if so, by when the work is likely to start on this Model station in Goa ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : (a) and (b) It is not proposed, at present, to add any more stations to the list of 67 Model Stations already approved. However, every effort will be made by the Railway to ensure that adequate amenities, as per norms, are provided at Margao and Vasco-de-Gama railway stations to handle the anticipated traffic, including tourist traffic, at these stations.

Working of the Metro in Calcutta

1925. SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any assessment has been made about the working of the Metro in Calcutta; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Only part sections of the Calcutta Metro Railway Project, namely, Dum-Dum-Belgachia and Esplanade-Tollyganj have been opened to traffic so far. Metro services on these sections are working satisfactorily and the people of Calcutta have been highly appreciative of the same. Full impact of the working of Metro-Railway will, however, be known only when the rest of the section from Esplanade to Belgachia is completed.

Electric locomotive technology in the Railways

1926. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether in a bid to catch up with the latest trends in the electric locomotive technology Indian Railways plans to import 3 phase AC motor drive electric locomotives; and

(b) if so, what is the total number of said locomotives and what would be the total cost of expenditure involved and to what exent those would be helpful in raising the goods trains traffic and passenger trains?

THE DEPTUY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) The total number of locomotives planned to be imported is 40 (30 freight and 10 passenger type).

(ii) The Commercial offers are yet to be opened and hence the costs are not available.

(iii) These locomotives will form basis for updating electric locomotives to the State of art technology to meet rapidly growing requirements of traffic and achieving energy conservation, higher operational efficiency, service reliability, reduced maintenance cost and improved customer service.

(iv) Freight locomotive will be capable of hauling 4500 ton loads at service speed of 100 KMPH against 65 KMPH with existing builds. The passenger locomotive will be capable of hauling at service speed of 160 KMPH with feasibility of uprating it to 200 KMPH.

Development of technology in the Railways

1927. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether working groups drawing experts from centres of learning research and industry have been set up in specific fields in the railways to devise ways and means for the development of technology;

(b) if so, by when the experts are likely to submit their recommendations; and

(c) what are the details of the new thrust to railway technical upgradation to boost the railways?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work of the nine technology development groups is of a continuous nature involving identification of projects and their review periodically till their successful completion.

(c) The Technology Development Plan is integrated to realise five Missions relating to improving the speed of passenger and freight trains, running of heavy haul freight trains, upgradation of the Metre Gauge System and developing capacity for absorbing identified futuristic technlogies.

Modernisation of air traffic

1928. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have cleared the scheme to modernise air traffic control at Bombay and Delhi airports;

(b) if so, what is the total amount of expenditure involved therein; and

(c) by when the scheme is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL) : (a) Not as yet.

(b) and (c) The total cost of the project is estimated at Rs. 293·77 crores. After the project is cleared by the Government, the National Airports Authority will take up the work and it is expected to be completed in about 3 years from the date of start of work.

Indian help to airlift the supplies to Kabul

1929. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India has offered to assist the Afghan Government in the airlifting of essential supplies to Kabul;